

Summary Of River Basin And Reservoir Conditions As Of April 15, 2004

Bear River Basin

2004 marks the fifth consecutive year of severely depleted water supplies in the Bear River Basin. Since 2000, Bear Lake has dropped 1.3 million-acre feet of active storage and as of April 15, 2004, has only 85,000 acre feet available for irrigation of 150,000 acres, which receives Bear Lake storage water below Bear Lake. The 85,000 acre-feet represents only 35 percent of a full allocation, and is 50 percent less than last year's allocation, making it the lowest irrigation allocation in history. It is likely that evaporation on Bear Lake will be greater than the allocation and by this fall Bear Lake is expected to drop to the same historical low level of 5902 feet, which last occurred in November 1935. Even with low lake levels, there is still over 5 million acre feet of inactive storage which will be available for boating, swimming, fishing and other recreation activities.

Weber River Basin

Like other areas of the state, the Weber Basin area has experienced normal snow levels through the first half of the season and a very dry spring. Reservoirs on the Weber and Ogden rivers are projected to peak at nearly the same levels as they did in 2003. Weber Basin Water Conservancy District launched a proactive program in 2003, which reduced all irrigation deliveries (agricultural flood and secondary irrigation water) down to 80 percent of the contract amounts. This took a great deal of cooperation among the farmers and secondary users in five counties to make the reduced allocations work throughout the irrigation season. The 2004 starting levels of the Weber District's reservoirs are a direct result of that program. Instead of the reservoirs notching downward with each continuing drought year, they were able to maintain the initial levels from one year to the next. This year Weber Basin is again reducing irrigation deliveries by 20 percent. Drinking water contracts are not affected by this reduction. However, a comprehensive water conservation program is being implemented in cooperation with the 40 municipal agencies, which receive culinary supplies from the District. A full-time water conservation specialists responds to calls and patrol neighborhoods with reminders and conservation information will enforce the no-watering times of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The District's goal is to institute changes that will carry through the next non-drought cycle. An ethics change by our citizens is what is needed so that conserved supplies may be depended upon for new uses.

Ogden River Basin

The Ogden River Water Users Association has a full supply of project irrigation water this year. Their allotment in Pineview Reservoir was filled in early April. This was due to having stored all inflow into Pineview Reservoir since shutdown of the irrigation season on October 1, 2003. Pine View Water Systems purchases additional water from the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District for their pressurized secondary system. Weber Basin has also cut 20 percent across the board to irrigation users again this year. Pine View Water Systems has adopted a policy of no watering between the hours of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. It will be strictly enforced again this year. Last year the Pine View Water Systems was able to meet the needs of its customers and still have a good carry over in the reservoir with cooperation of the users and their conservation practices.

Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District

Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District is projecting that it will be able to meet all contract deliveries in 2004 to its 19 wholesale agencies and 8,500 retail customers, mainly because of 50,000 acre feet of Central Utah Project water supply in Jordanelle Reservoir, 20,000 acre feet of groundwater, plus other miscellaneous sources of supply. Jordan Valley remains concerned about the lack of water in Deer Creek Reservoir, low water levels in Utah Lake (which must meet the needs of senior agricultural water rights before water can be stored upstream), and competition for groundwater in Salt Lake County. Continuing conservation efforts and the cooperation of water users will be needed to keep demand within manageable limits.

Provo River Basin/Deer Creek Reservoir

With a lack of carryover storage from previous years due to the ongoing drought, Provo River Water Users Association has issued an interim "zero allotment" for 2004 until snowmelt runoff replenishes Deer Creek Reservoir. Even after runoff, however, projections are for a much below average water allocation for 2004 — perhaps around 40 percent of normal. Association shareholders were restricted in their Project water allocations in 2002 and 2003 as well, with 55 percent and 75 percent allocations in those years, respectively. Deer Creek Dam and Reservoir is the major feature of the Provo River Project, which also includes the Duchesne Diversion and Tunnel, the Weber-Provo Diversion and Canal, and the Murdock Diversion and Provo Reservoir Canal, among other features. The Project provides an annual average of 100,000 acre-feet of water for municipal and industrial purposes, as well as for irrigation. It is estimated that nearly 1 million people receive at least a portion of their drinking water supply from Deer Creek Reservoir.

Washington County Water Conservancy District

Washington County will experience a severely depleted water supply again in 2004. Currently Quail Creek contains 28,000 acre feet, which is 70 percent of full. The new reservoir, Sand Hollow is in the process of filling but contains only 13,000 acre feet or 25 percent of full capacity. Allocations will be restricted and conservation measures will be implemented for all users.